1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
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relatives to help. All the members of the hamlet who do not have pressing work of their own are expected to answer this call and appear the next morning at the place where the work is to be done. The *brothers* of the married women of the households who are giving the bee are also expected to help if they can. While the men work, the women prepare the feast. Then, early in the afternoon, after a long morning's work, the men stop and go to the house of one of the boss gardeners where the feast is to be given. The men form a separate group from the women, eat in a leisurely manner, smoke, chew betel, and indulge in horseplay between courses. After the meal the older men either gossip or nap while the boys tease one another and play. The work is over for the day. The Kwoma are perfectly familiar with the patterned behavior of these work parties, since they have participated in them frequently during childhood and adolescence. When they become adult they have to plan the work bees, direct the gathering of food, and announce the day.

The first task in gardening is to choose a site, a decision which rests with the boss gardeners. They must balance the advantages and disadvantages of cultivating a plot in the hamlet or in an outlying district.[3] If the garden is planted near the dwelling, it has to be enclosed by a fence to prevent domestic pigs from rooting up the crop, but it is near at hand. If a site is cleared in an outlying district, it may take several hours to walk there, but it need not be fenced.

The garden site is usually cleared by means of a number of work bees. Since it takes considerable time and effort to provide food for the feast, the task of clearing a site is normally spread over several weeks, and sometimes months. The first task, which is performed by adolescent boys and men, is to climb the trees and lop off the branches in order to let sun down to the earth below. The old men and children clear the brush and stack it and the cut branches into piles for burning.

After the site has been cleared and the rubbish burned,

[3] Property rights, also, determine the choice. The division and ownership of land will be discussed below.

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the boss gardeners normally prepare another bee to break the ground for the yam hills, although the gardening group may do this work alone. If the latter is the case, the women of the group work with the men instead of preparing the feast. Since Kwoma gardens are always on a slope, each hill is made by leveling the ground into a little terrace about a foot square. This is accomplished by means of a spadelike digging stick. When the slope is especially steep, the terraces are buttressed by a retaining wall of sticks laid one on top of the other, held on one side by the pressure of the earth and on the other by pegs stuck in the ground. These miniature retaining walls prevent the hills from being washed out by a heavy rain. The worker, with a final thrust of his digging stick into the middle of each terrace, pries open a hole large enough to receive a seed yam.

The Kwoma consider that the success of the crop depends more upon planting than upon any other part of the gardening process. Only an adult man who has become a member of *Nokwi*, the highest stage of the yam cult, may do this. They believe that if a youth or a woman should put the seed yams in the ground, the yield would be meager, hard, and unpalatable. Normally, one of the boss gardeners has attained the proper status to plant yams. If not, then the nearest patrilineal relative who is a member of *Nokwi* will perform the task in return for a share in the produce of the garden. On the night before a man is to plant yams, he shares with other members of *Nokwi* a ritual soup which is believed to be potent enough to kill a woman or child. From this time on until the yam shoots break the ground, he may not chew betel, scratch himself except with a stick, or smoke except by holding his cigarette with tweezers. If he does not carry out these rituals, it is believed that his yams will not germinate. The planter performs his task by putting the yam into the hole in the hill so that the butt is down and the head (stem) is up, and the axis roughly perpendicular to level ground. He then covers the yam with earth so that the upper end is just below the surface.

Kwoma beliefs about blood appear again to determine a

Gardening-- planting of yams

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[313] In preparation for the planting of yams, the land is cleared, the tops of large trees are cut off and the small trees are chopped down entirely. The small trees are allowed to lie on the ground for a couple of months, or until they are thoroughly dried. The refuse is then collected and burned. The ground is broken with a digging stick and the planter puts in the yams.

[311] Because of the hilly terrain, small terraces about a foot square are built. If the slope is very steep a small buttress is made with pegs stuck in the ground and cross sticks thrown behind them for a sort of retaining wall. If the slope is gentle, the terrace is made by simply leveling out the earth. The breaking of the ground is done with a pointed stick which is forced in the ground and then pried up hill while the ground is forced out and down. This prying is repeated until the terrace
244 is formed and the ground is softened. The seeds are planted butt end down and the head up at right angles to the level ground, and covered so that the stem is just below the surface.

After the yams have begun to come up, stringers are put up for the vines. Split liana stringers are suspended from the branches of the cut-off trees and pegged to the ground beside each yam hill. (See figure) Care is taken so that one stringer is not pegged above another depriving it of rain and sunlight. This is done for all yam plants, the vines twining around the stringers.